GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4585
ANSWERED ON:19.12.2001
ANTIBIOTIC DRUG FOR ANTHRAX
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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether US is leaning away from antibiotic drug Cipro to the older drug Doxycycline for the treatment of anthrax;

(b) a team of scientists at JNU Bio-tech Division has developed a cure for anthrax; and

(c) the preventive measures India is adopting to ward off any possible anthrax related crisis?

Answer

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR)

(a): Drugs for Anthrax are mainly antibiotics like Pencillin, Ciprofloxacine and Doxycycline.Each patient is treated according to the sensitivity of the organism to the anti-biotics.

(b): Centre for Biotechnology, Jawaharlal Nehru University has produced Protective Antigen.As per the information received from JNU, the laboratory scale technology has been transferred to Panacea Biotec Ltd. to undertake animal/clinical trials to assess the efficacy/side effects and get all necessary clearances from the Government to produce this vaccine.

(c): The Government has taken following actions in the context of the present international scenario:

1. A detailed list of biological agents used as weapons prepared by the Indian Council of Medical Research along with signs and symptoms, likely method of dissemination, incubation period, lethality and the availability of vaccines, anti-microbial therapy and treatment has been circulated to Health Secretary and Director of Health Services of all States/UTs, and Central Government hospitals advising them to take precautionary steps.

2. National Institute of Communicable Diseases, 22, Sham Nath Marg, Delhi-110 054, an Institute under Directorate General of Health Services has been designated as the nodal agency for carrying out the tests of suspected Anthrax samples.

3. CD Alert, a monthly Newsletter of National Institute of Communicable Diseases titled `Bioterrorism-Public Health system to Remain Alert` exclusively on Anthrax has been widely circulated. It has also been put in the Website of MOHFW (http://mohfm.nic.in) for information of general public.

4. Do`s & Don`ts has already been published in the leading National Dailies regarding Anthrax.

5. A meeting-cum workshop on Biological & Chemical Terrorism was convened by the Department of Health on 29th October, 2001 in New Delhi. The representatives from the States informed the preparatory measures taken by them and assured availability of drugs in adequate quantity to tackle any situation.

6. The situation is being monitored.